



PRINCIPLES OF PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP

The following *Principles of Product Stewardship* have been developed to support state and local agencies in promoting product stewardship and developing voluntary agreements with industry and environmental groups to reduce the health and environmental impacts from consumer products. These principles will serve as the basis for discussion in each product category.

It is in the best interest of states, local governments, industries, environmental groups, and consumers to reduce the adverse health and environmental impacts of consumer products. To achieve this result, product stewardship efforts aim to encourage manufacturers to take increasing responsibility to reduce the entire life-cycle impacts of a product and its packaging – energy and materials consumption, air and water emissions, the amount of toxics in the product, worker safety, and waste disposal – in product design and in the end-of-life management of the products they produce.

- **RESPONSIBILITY:** The responsibility for reducing product impacts should be shared among industry (designers, manufacturers, and retailers of products or product components), government, and consumers. The greater the ability an entity has to minimize a product's life-cycle impacts, the greater is its degree of responsibility, and opportunity, for addressing those impacts.
- **INTERNALIZE COSTS:** All product lifecycle costs – from using resources, to reducing health and environmental impacts throughout the production process, to managing products at the end-of-life – should be included in the total product cost. The environmental costs of product manufacture, use, and disposal should be minimized, to the greatest extent possible, for local and state governments, and ultimately shifted to the manufacturers and consumers of products. Manufacturers should thus have a direct financial incentive to redesign their products to reduce these costs.
- **INCENTIVES FOR CLEANER PRODUCTS AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:** Policies that promote and implement product stewardship principles should create incentives for the manufacturer to design and produce “cleaner” products – ones made using less energy, materials, and toxics, and which result in less waste (through reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting) and use less energy to operate. These policies should also create incentives for the development of a sustainable and environmentally-sound system to collect, reuse, and recycle products at the end of their lives.

- **FLEXIBLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES:** Those that are responsible for reducing the health and environmental impacts of products should have flexibility in determining how to most effectively address those impacts. The performance of responsible parties shall be measured by the achievement of goal-oriented results.
- **ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS:** Industry should provide leadership in realizing these principles. Government will provide leadership in promoting the practices of product stewardship through procurement, technical assistance, program evaluation, education, market development, agency coordination, and by addressing regulatory barriers and, where necessary, providing regulatory incentives and disincentives. Industry and government shall provide – and consumers should take full advantage of – information needed to make responsible environmental purchasing, reuse, recycling, and disposal decisions.